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CONTENTS

MING MANDARIN SQUARES	5
<i>Schuyler Cammann</i>	
TWO REMARKABLE FIFTEENTH CENTURY CARPETS FROM SPAIN	15
<i>Louise W. Mackie</i>	
CLASSICAL GREEK TEXTILES FROM NYMPHAEUM	33
<i>John Peter Wild</i>	
PRACTICAL DEFINITIONS FOR THREE OPENWORK TECHNIQUES	35
TRADITIONAL BERBER WEAVING IN CENTRAL MOROCCO	41
<i>Sally Forelli and Jeanette Harries</i>	
A PERUVIAN CROSSED-WARP WEAVE	61
<i>Nancy Castle</i>	
HIGH-STATUS CAPS OF THE KONGO AND MBUNDU PEOPLES	71
<i>Gordon D. Gibson and Cecilia R. McGurk</i>	
BOOK REVIEW	97
<i>June Taboroff</i>	
TEXTILE MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES and ADVISORY COUNCIL	99
TEXTILE MUSEUM STAFF	99
BOOKS FOR SALE	100

COVER: Detail of a Mudejar carpet from Spain, second quarter 15th century, showing the coat of arms of Maria Enriquez, daughter of Alfonso Enriquez, 25th Admiral of Castile, on the front cover and the arms of Juan de Rojas on the back cover. Textile Museum 1976.10.2. Purchase, Arthur D. Jenkins Gift Fund and Proceeds from Sale of Art. (See Figure 2 in "Two Remarkable Fifteenth Century Carpets from Spain" by Louise W. Mackie.)

Transparency by Raymond L. Schwartz.

The views expressed by the authors are their own; they do not necessarily reflect those of the Textile Museum.

TWO REMARKABLE FIFTEENTH CENTURY CARPETS FROM SPAIN

LOUISE W. MACKIE

Two handsome Mudejar carpets woven in Spain during the 15th century are the inspiration for this article. One, with brilliant colors and intricate patterning, displays the coat of arms of the wealthy Enriquez family who were Admirals of Castile. It is one of only ten surviving Mudejar carpets with Spanish coats of arms. The second carpet, with a distinctive cloud pattern copied from older carpets imported from Turkey, is the only known example of its type. Both carpets were recently acquired by the Textile Museum from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington, D.C., through the generous assistance of Arthur D. Jenkins, a Trustee of the Museum.¹ They join what is now the finest collection of Spanish carpets in the world.²

Marvelous geometric patterns with brilliant colors that dazzle the eye were especially fashionable during the middle ages in Spain. The finest testimony to this magnificence is the Alhambra, the Islamic palace built in Granada during the 14th century, which also represents the final artistic blossoming of the Muslims who had once ruled most of the Iberian peninsula.

After their conquest in the 8th century, the Muslims developed a civilization of exceptional brilliance in the city of Cordova rivalled only by that of Baghdad, Cairo and Constantinople. As a renowned center for science and the arts, Cordova was visited by people of all creeds and nations. By the 13th century, the Christians had gained strength and began conquering Muslim territory. The Muslims managed to retain control of only a small area in the southeast where Granada served as the capital of another flourishing Islamic civilization during the Nasrid Dynasty (1230-1492). Finally in 1492 Granada fell to the Christian rulers, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, thus terminating Muslim rule in Spain.

During these eight centuries, the artistic styles of the Muslims and Christians existed side by side. In addition, a Mudejar style became increasingly prominent in which Islamic patterning strongly influenced Christian art. The word Mudejar refers to Muslims living under Christian rule. Considerable Mudejar art survives from the 13th through the 15th centuries. The Mudejars were, for example, the weavers of carpets. Thus, despite the expansion of Christian sovereignty, the Islamic artistic heritage was not severed until 1492.

During the 15th century, a few of the Christian elite commissioned the Mudejars to weave carpets with their coats of arms. Undoubtedly, only carpets of the finest quality and with the most fashionable patterns were selected.

Coats of arms were especially significant within the traditional society in the Iberian peninsula during the middle ages. They were symbols of an individual's distinction. As such, they also played an important part in architectural decoration, floor tiles,³ stone sarcophagi, silk shrouds,⁴ and even functional items of home use such as pottery bowls (Fig. 7). All of these coats of arms belonged to Christian royalty or nobility; the use of personal blazons in Islamic culture is rare.

Throughout the history of Islamic carpets, extremely few carpets with blazons are known. The arms are usually those of European families and, although they have Near Eastern field and border patterns, most were actually woven in northern Europe or in England.⁵ The well-known exception is the group of Persian silk carpets with a blazon of Polish royalty.⁶ All of these armorial carpets were woven at least one hundred and fifty years after the Mudejar armorial carpets.

The armorial carpets woven by the Mudejars are therefore the oldest known armorial carpets and they are also the oldest surviving complete carpets woven on the Iberian peninsula. There are however earlier references to carpet weaving in Spain. One occurs in a

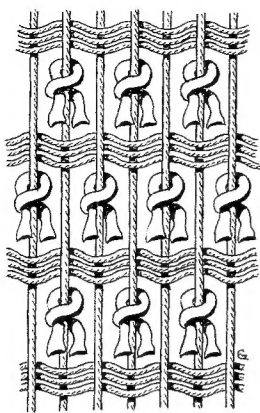


Fig. 1 Single-warp knot known as Spanish knot. Drawing by C. G. Ellis.

Latin poem of the 11th century. Another appears in a description by the 12th century geographer, al-Idrisi. He recorded that woolen carpets of excellent quality were woven in the southeastern province of Murcia, citing the town of Cuenca and stating that in Chinchilla, woolen carpets were made that could not be imitated elsewhere because they were dependent on the quality of the air and water.⁷ The significance of this observation is confirmed by modern-day weaving practices. Some of these twelfth-thirteenth century carpets were even exported. They are recorded as being at the Fatimid court in Cairo in 1124 and small fragments have been excavated in Egypt.⁸

These early fragments were woven in the same technique as the carpets of the 15th through 17th centuries. They were made with a single-warp knot (Fig. 1), often called the Spanish knot, which was wrapped around alternate warps in successive rows, suggesting on the reverse a chessboard effect. One row of weft, composed of two or more yarns, was inserted after each row of knots. The early fragments tend to have about two hundred knots per square inch, whereas most of the 15th and 16th century carpets have about one hundred knots per square inch, a high enough knot count to produce a sturdy and durable carpet. The single-warp knot continued to be used, even when foreign patterns were copied, until the 17th century when the symmetrical knot, often referred to as the G rdes or Turkish knot, was employed primarily in carpets copying Turkish patterns.

The earliest known examples with the knot that has come to be known as the Spanish knot were excavated in Chinese Turkestan in

a 3rd-6th century context by Sir Aurel Stein. Its use elsewhere has not been verified. The identical construction of the knots from the East and from Spain causes some scholars to suspect direct influence although confirmation will probably always be lacking.

An historical anecdote draws attention to the peculiar Spanish fashion of covering floors with carpets during the 13th century. When the Spanish ambassadors arrived in London to negotiate the marriage of Leonor of Castile with King Edward I, they spread costly carpets on the floors and hung silks and tapestries on the walls of their lodgings. This luxurious display evoked abusive comments from the people of London. However, when Leonor arrived in October, 1255, the streets and residences were decorated in the Spanish fashion. The carpets had probably been imported from Spain.

Although little is known about carpet production during the 14th century, the scenario changes in the 15th. Not only are there documents recording their production but, more importantly, the carpets themselves survive with brilliant colors and in surprisingly good condition. Three cities in Murcia, Letur, Lietor and Alcaraz, are known in particular for their carpet production during this time. Although Murcia had been annexed by the Christians who ruled Aragon, the Muslims, or more correctly, the Mudejars are believed to have continued as weavers.

With the end of Muslim rule in the peninsula and the initial expulsion of Muslims (and Jews) in 1492, a marked change of taste occurred. European art became the new fashion. Huge silk patterns with very few colors were used in weaving carpets. With time, the industry then centered in Alcaraz and Cuenca began to decline.

The carpet weaving industry in Spain reached its height during the 15th century. The carpets were probably woven in large manufactories, possibly organized with guilds as in other types of production in Spain. However, despite their commercial production, the carpet-weaving industry appears to have had little impact on the Spanish economy. Contemporary authors discuss the economic importance of several types of fabrics, such as silks and embroideries, and they emphasize the sheep and wool industry, but they do not mention carpet-weaving.

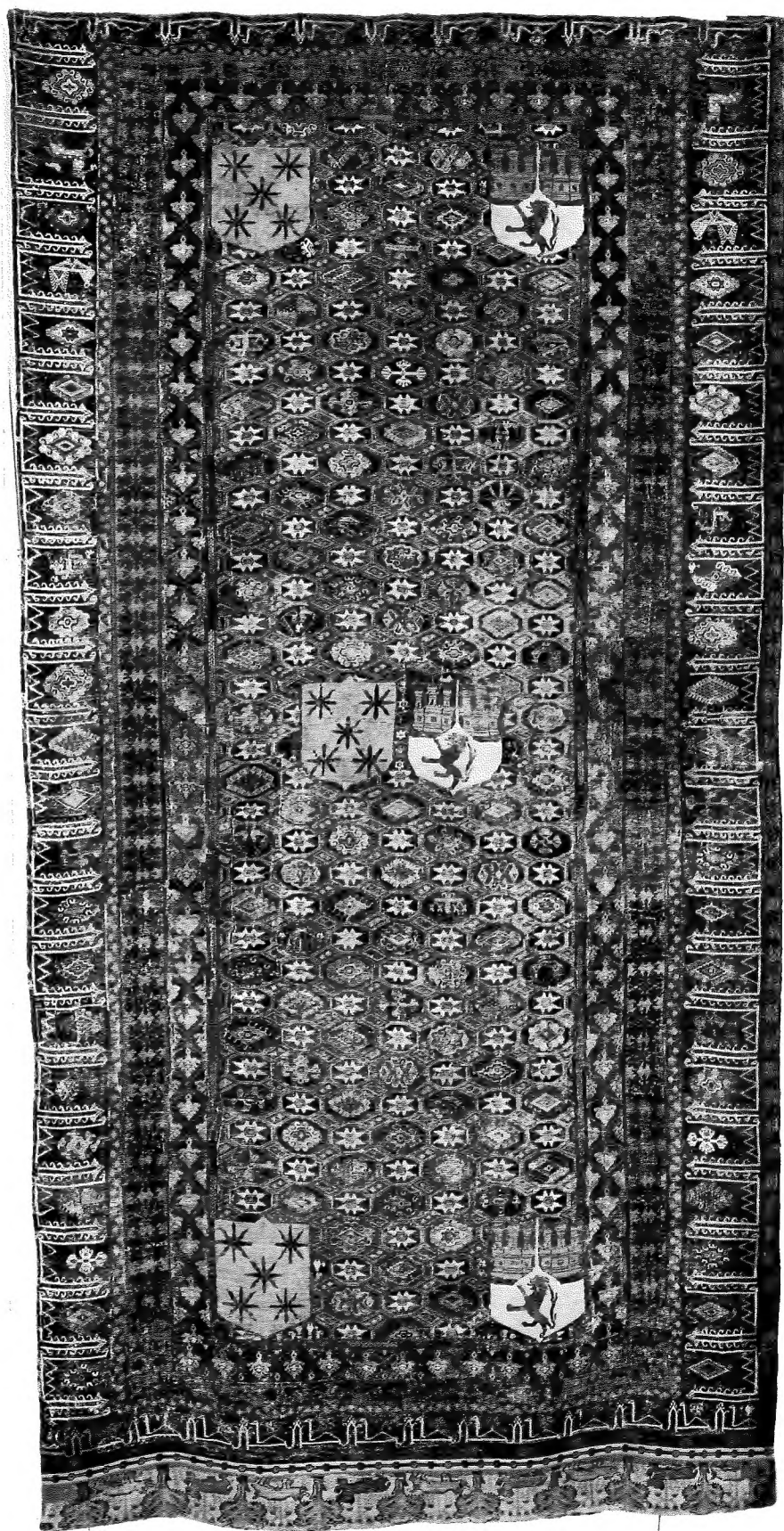


Fig. 2 Carpet with arms of Maria Enriquez, daughter of Alfonso Enriquez, 25th Admiral of Castile, and Juan de Rojas (d. 1454), second quarter 15th century, Letur? Spain, L. 3.73 m. W. 1.98 m. Textile Museum 1976.10.2, Purchase, Arthur D. Jenkins Gift Fund and Proceeds from the Sale of Art.

Yet within the history of carpets, Mudejar carpets have considerable importance. The 12th-13th century fragments from Egypt are among the oldest surviving examples anywhere, and a surprising number of carpets exist from the 15th century, especially in comparison with those from the Near East. Relatively few Turkish carpets can be attributed to the 15th century despite extensive production, and nothing survives from Iran. Carpets woven in Cairo towards the end of the century, however, do exist. In other areas and in Europe either the industry had not yet been started or carpets have not survived.

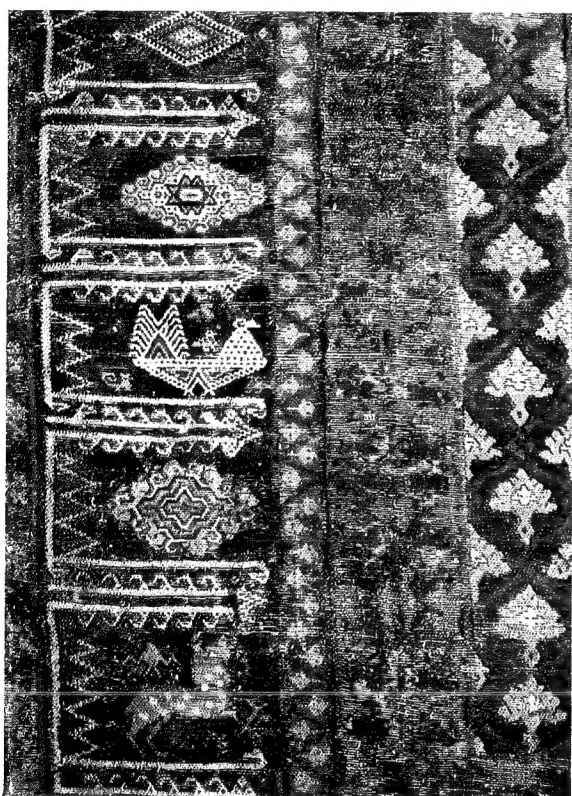


Fig. 3 Detail of the border of the carpet illustrated in Figure 2.

THE ARMORIAL CARPET

Within this broad context the importance of the Textile Museum's recently acquired armorial carpet should be evident (Cover, Figs. 2 and 3; technical information is in Appendix A). Close examination of this brilliantly colored carpet shows that a sophisticated bal-

ance between repetition and variation has been achieved, a rather exceptional feature in carpets.

Although the ground color is a rich blue, it is hardly apparent owing to the detailed patterning in many vivid colors, especially a rich yellow and cardinal red, not to mention white. The field pattern is organized by a grid composed of irregular octagons of two sizes and small rhomboids. The large and small octagons alternate. Each of the small octagons contains a white, eight-pointed star on the rich blue ground, whereas the large octagons contain an array of motifs in unpredictable sequence. There are fanciful lozenges with kaleidoscopic colors. Occasionally stylized animals and birds appear. Even the small rhomboids are richly patterned by colorful lozenges.

There is a surprising wealth of border patterns, six in all, plus an extra end-panel at one end. In contrast with most Near Eastern carpets, the borders here are unusually wide, accounting in fact for more than half the width of the carpet.⁹ At the ends, however, the border stripes are narrower, a feature characteristic of armorial carpets.

The placement of the six border stripes is distinctive. The widest stripe, here containing the dominant pattern—derivative-kufic script—is not centered but instead is situated almost at the outer edge of the carpet. This seemingly precarious location contributed to the skillful balance that has been so admirably achieved in the design of this carpet.

Beginning with the innermost stripe and reading outwards, the patterns are as follows: *first*: diamonds with frequent color changes; *second*: red ogees with mustard-colored palmettes on a rich blue ground, severed palmettes at the sides; *third*: dark-green four-part leaf motif originally on a dark brown ground that has corroded thereby exposing the warps and wefts of the ground weave; *fourth*: undulating blue vine with yellow blossoms on a red ground; *fifth*: derivative-kufic script (angular Arabic script) on a rich blue ground with fanciful lozenges and occasional birds and spotted animals between the tall shafts of the letters; *sixth*: green and mustard-colored foliate motif on a dark brown ground, now corroded.

The extra end-panel shows wild boars and bears among trees. A corresponding panel

must have originally appeared at the other end of the carpet.

There are six shields, one in each corner of the field and two in the center. The blazons of Maria Enriquez, daughter of Alfonso Enriquez, the 25th Admiral of Castile, are on the right side and those of her husband, Juan de Rojas, Lord of Cabia, on the left. When the carpet was commissioned, colored models of these coats of arms would have been provided. For some unknown reason, the blazons were woven into the carpet pattern upside down. Notice their relationship to the animals and birds. Besides indicating ownership, the blazons provide a date before which the carpet must have been woven; Juan de Rojas died in 1454. Unfortunately their wedding date is not known which means it is impossible to state an exact date after which the carpet must have been made. Nevertheless, it can be attributed to the second quarter of the 15th century.

During the 15th century, successive generations of the wealthy Enriquez family were appointed to the powerful position of Admiral of Castile, beginning with Alfonso (1354-1429). The family also conducted the renowned Castilian market-fair of Medina de Rioseco and had extensive land holdings.

Three other carpets with the Enriquez coat of arms are known. One of these was made for Maria's eldest brother, Fadrique (Fig. 5), another is attributed to him (Fig. 4), while a third cannot be assigned to any specific member of the Enriquez family.¹⁰ Fadrique Enriquez (d. 1473) succeeded to several of the titles and honors held by his father, Alfonso, including Admiral of Castile.

Three of these carpets with the Enriquez arms are said to have come at the beginning of this century from the Convent of Santa Clara at Palencia¹¹ which was founded by Alfonso Enriquez and his wife, Juana de Mendoza, parents of Maria and Fadrique. Alfonso was buried there in 1429, Juana in 1431. Listed in Juana de Mendoza's bequest to the convent are two armorial carpets, neither surviving today, that displayed her coat of arms and that of her husband. They were to have been put before the high altar, the place of greatest distinction. Although none of the founders' nine daughters was directly affiliated with the convent, the only daughter of Maria Enriquez and Juan de Rojas, Isabel de

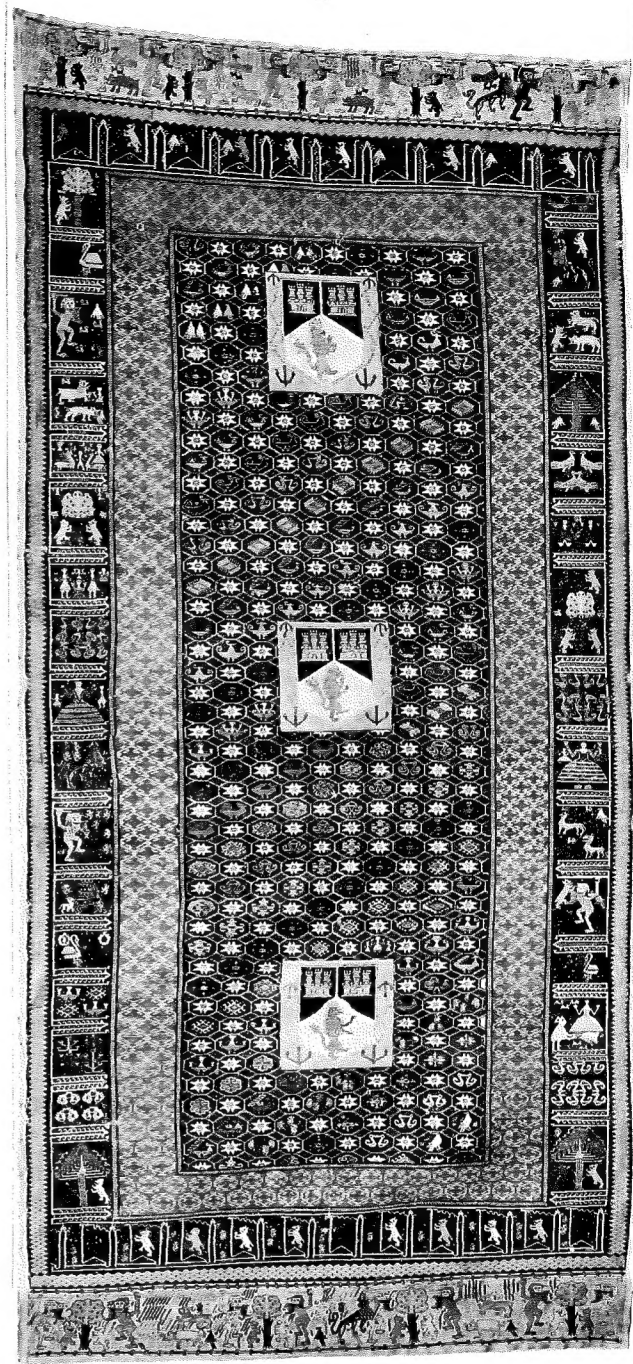


Fig. 4 Carpet with arms attributed to Fadrique Enriquez, 26th Admiral of Castile (d. 1473), third quarter 15th century, Letur? Spain, L. 5.82 m. W. 2.69 m. Philadelphia Museum of Art 46-28-28, Joseph Lees Williams Memorial Collection.

Rojas, became the Abbess. Also, three daughters of their only son Sancho de Rojas Mar-
nique became nuns at the convent. These close associations could have provided the

circumstances under which the carpets went to the convent where they survived for more than four hundred years.

After leaving the convent early this century, the carpet with the Enriquez/Rojas coat of arms passed through three collections¹² before being acquired by Robert Woods Bliss for his collection at Dumbarton Oaks. In 1976, it came to the Textile Museum.

The most famous armorial carpet is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Fig. 4). It also bears the Enriquez arms but without those of a spouse making it impossible to identify firmly the original owner. Although a stunning carpet, it lacks the spontaneous variation of motifs and colors that gives the Enriquez/Rojas carpet in the Textile Museum its sophisticated quality. Using the same layout, the motifs and colors are repeated in prominent diagonal rows slanting noticeably up to the right. Animals, birds and fanciful human figures are included. The deep blue color of the ground is dominant. The other colors, a soft yellow and a brownish-red, for instance, are more subdued than the corresponding ones in the new Textile Museum carpet.

The handling of the border also differs. Two of the five patterned stripes are dominant. The braid pattern in the outer stripe is almost indistinguishable owing to a color change; a dye has faded. Fugitive dyes are not usually recognized as occurring in Mudejar carpets until the 16th century which makes its presence in this 15th century carpet noteworthy. The hunting scenes in the extra end-panels are the liveliest renditions known.

The dating of the Philadelphia carpet is problematical. It is tentatively attributed to Fadrique Enriquez (d. 1473), the 26th Admiral of Castile and brother of Maria Enriquez whose arms appear in the new Textile Museum carpet woven during the second quarter of the 15th century. The more controlled handling of the pattern and colors in the Philadelphia carpet suggests that it was woven later, perhaps during the third quarter of the 15th century. In addition, the representation of the blazon is puzzling; the lion is reversed and the bordure charged with anchors is not recorded until the late 15th century.¹³ In attributing this carpet to Fadrique, the 26th Admiral of Castile, and to the third quarter of the 15th century, it is sus-

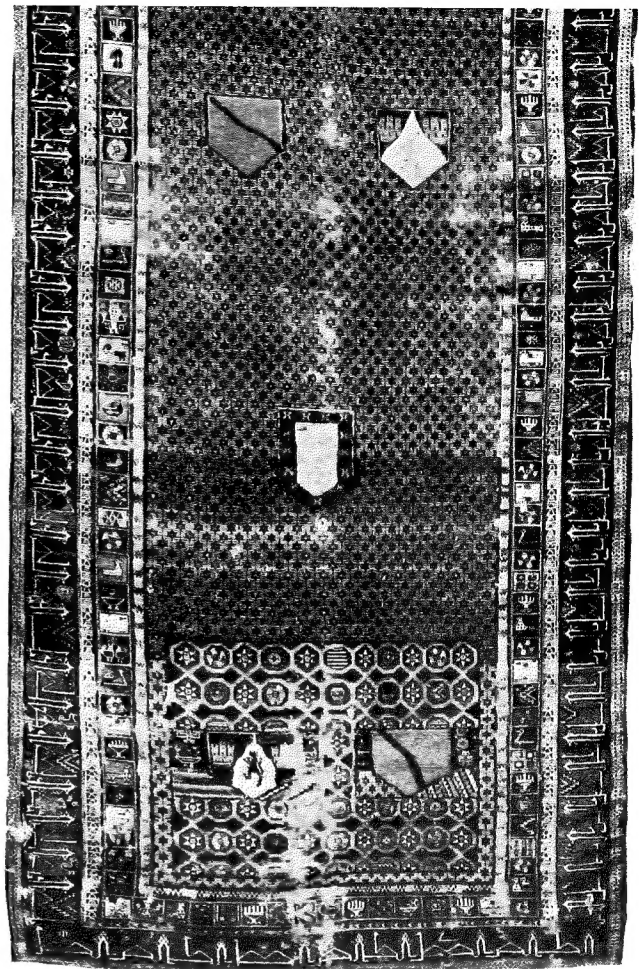


Fig. 5 Detail of carpet with arms of Fadrique Enriquez, 26th Admiral of Castile (d. 1473) and Marina de Ayala (married 1420s) and Order of the Banda, second quarter 15th century, Letur? Spain, L. 8 m. W. 2.30 m. Vizcaya, Dade County Art Museum, Miami, Florida.

pected that the anchor charged bordure was used earlier than its otherwise earliest recorded use.

A third Enriquez carpet that was, however, definitely made for Fadrique is owned by Vizcaya, the James Deering Estate in Miami (Fig. 5). The presence of the blazon of Fadrique's first wife, Marina de Ayala, along the center of the carpet, identifies the original owners and indicates it was woven during the second quarter of the 15th century. Although their wedding date is not known, circumstances suggest that it must have taken place during the 1420s.¹⁴ Beside the Enriquez blazon is a third coat of arms, the Order of the Banda (scarf) of Castile, most famous of Spain's medieval orders to which Fadrique probably belonged.

For reasons unknown, the pattern of the field was completely changed after a portion of the carpet had already been woven. The warps are continuous and have not been cut. The geometric layout used at the beginning of the carpet differs somewhat from that in the other two Enriquez carpets. Octagons alternate with hexagons leaving connected diamonds in between. The second and primary field pattern is formed by continuous, six-pointed stars, arranged in a scheme unusual for the Iberian peninsula. This star pattern also appears in the inner border at the beginning of this carpet and in another carpet border (Fig. 6).

Besides the Enriquez carpets, only three other carpets have identifiable blazons, all bearing the arms of Maria of Castile and her husband, Alfonso V, King of Aragon and Sicily from 1416 to 1458. These carpets, virtually alike, are in the Textile Museum (Fig. 6), the Hispanic Society of America in New York City, and the Detroit Institute of Arts.¹⁵ Their use of pattern and color achieves a balance between repetition and variation, characteristic also of the exceptionally brilliant Enriquez/Rojas carpet in the Textile Museum. These colors, however, are more somber: brownish-red, warm brown, subdued yellow, deep blue and white.

The geometric layout of the field is simpler than in the Enriquez carpets; octagons of uniform size alternate with diamonds. Their ground colors vary, however, depending on the motif displayed.¹⁶ Alternate octagons contain white six-pointed stars on deep blue, a unifying feature of the pattern. The other octagons have a variety of crystalline-shaped motifs selected at random on either a brownish-red or a warm brown ground. Fanciful animals, birds and human figures appear occasionally.

Seven patterned border stripes are preserved. Two originally commanded visual prominence: the diamonds and the now fragmentary derivative-kufic. One of the stripes has the same continuous star pattern that forms most of the field of the Enriquez/Banda/Ayala carpet (Fig. 5). The colors of the two carpets are also similar.

Two adjacent shields fill the width of the field displaying the quarterings of Castile-Leon on the right and the bars of Aragon on the left. They refer to Maria of Castile, born

in 1401 to King Enrique III of Castile and Catalina de Lancaster. It was King Enrique who in 1405 conferred the prestigious office of the Admiral of Castile on his uncle, Alfonso Enriquez, whose children Maria and Fadrique also commissioned armorial carpets. In 1415, Maria of Castile married her cousin, Alfonso, Prince of Gerona and heir to the throne of Aragon. The following year, he became King of Aragon and Sicily. Known as the Magnanimous, Alfonso V travelled extensively abroad and in 1432 sailed to Sicily never to return. In his absence, Queen Maria served as his regent. Maria and Alfonso both died in 1458. The three carpets, therefore, were woven probably between 1416 and 1432 while the King was still in Spain, although they could have been woven until 1458. They are said to have survived in the Convent of Santa Isabel de los Reyes in Toledo until early this century.¹⁷

Besides the four Enriquez and three Castile/Aragon carpets, there are three other carpets with as yet unidentified arms.¹⁸ There are also a few carpets with field and border patterns closely related to those in the armorial carpets, but without any blazons.¹⁹

How long had these patterns been woven? The earliest representation of this type of pattern in a carpet, even with fringe (Fig. 8) was painted in a fresco between 1344-1346 by Matteo di Giovanetto of Viterbo in the Chapel of Saint Martial in the Palace of the Popes of Avignon, which became a cultural and intellectual center during the brief presence of the popes in the 14th century. The carpet in the fresco has the same grid layout and six-pointed star that occurs in the Castile/Aragon carpet (Fig. 6).

Perhaps the only earlier representation of a carpet with coats of arms appears in an Italian miniature in the Bible completed for Manfred before his coronation as King of Sicily in 1258.²⁰ The fringed carpet with a plain lattice field is framed by three border stripes displaying the arms of Sicily and Aragon and may have been imported from Spain.

Inventories exist in which carpets were listed but rarely with illuminating details. Two carpets with shields were included among the effects of Martin the First of Aragon in 1410.²¹ And two armorial carpets of Spanish work were listed among the possessions of the French Duc de Berry in 1416,

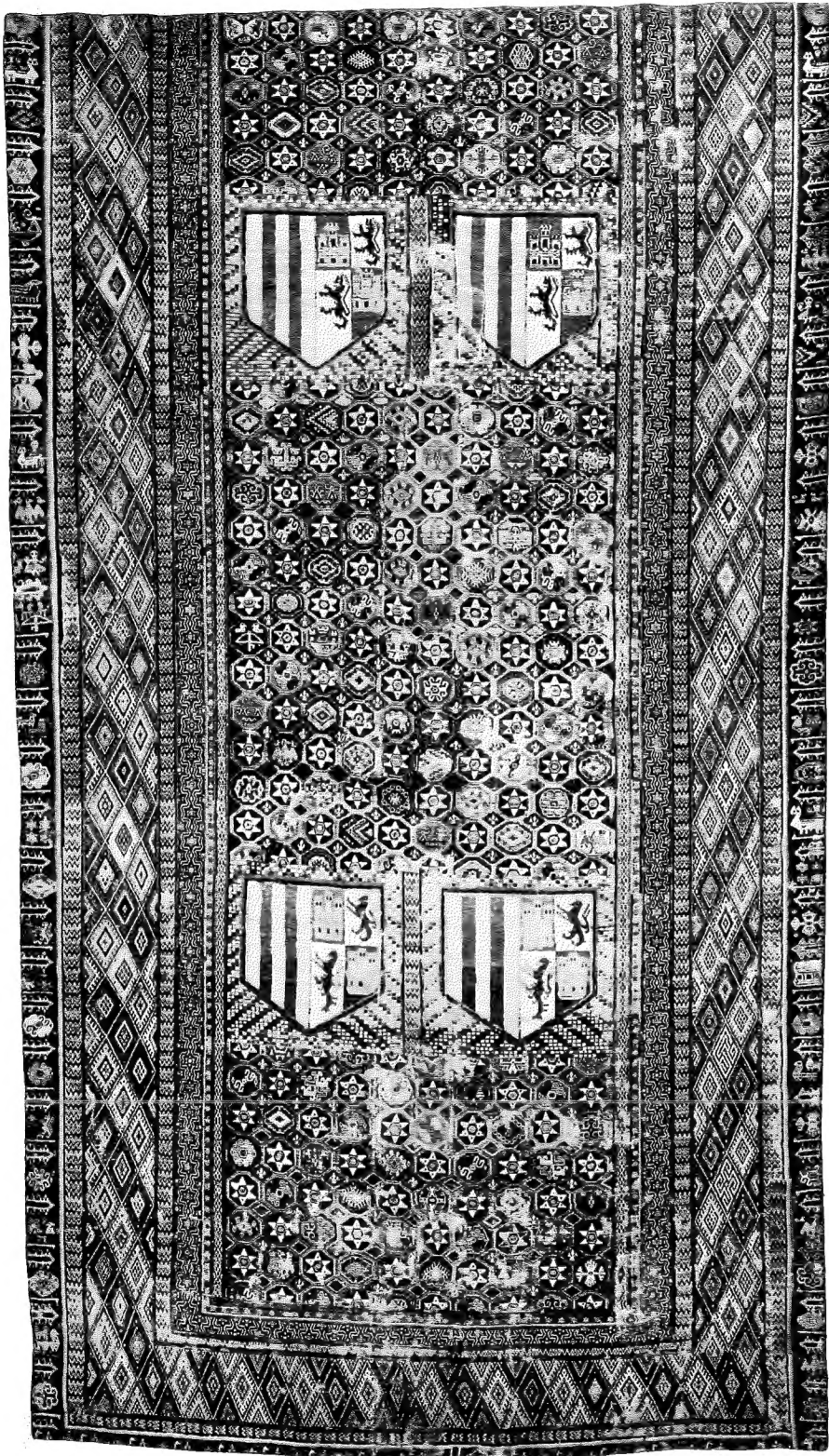


Fig. 6 Incomplete carpet with arms of Queen Maria of Castile and King Alfonso V of Aragon, 1416-1432, Letur? Spain, L. 3.97 m. W. 2.24 m. Textile Museum R44.4.1.

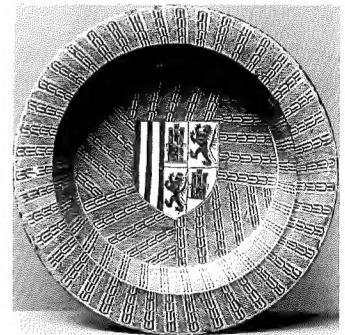


Fig. 7 Luster decorated ceramic basin with arms of Maria of Castile, Queen of Alfonso V of Aragon, second quarter 15th century, Manises, Spain. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 243-1853.



Fig. 8 Detail of fresco with carpet with armorial pattern by Matteo de Giovanetto, 1344-1346. Avignon, France, Palace of the Popes. After E. de Lorey, "Le tapis d'Avignon," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1932, fig. 4.

one with the arms of the cardinal of Viviers, the other with the arms of Castile.²²

Therefore, as early as the beginning of the 14th century, patterns were being woven that were later used in armorial carpets, a fact confirmed by the Avignon fresco, even though extant carpets with identifiable blazons do not occur until the second decade of the 15th century. Most of the surviving armorial carpets were probably woven during the second and third quarters of the 15th century.

Where they were woven is more problematical. Contemporary citations have yet to reveal a clue. Fifteenth-century carpets are believed to have been made in the province of Murcia which, as mentioned above, was often listed in documents as having carpet-weaving centers. Some patterns can be identified with Alcaraz.²³ Their designs and colors, however, are noticeably different from those in the armorial carpets which suggests that the armorial carpets were made in another center. They have tentatively been placed in the documented carpet-weaving town of Letur or Lietor,²⁴ an attribution that awaits confirmation.

Let us now consider the style and iconography of these armorial carpets. The skilled balance between repetition and variation, the juxtaposition of angular and curvilinear drawing, and the use of strong colors are the striking features of these carpets. Together they form a highly distinctive style. The use of patterns, excluding the blazons, does not create areas of primary or secondary importance. Instead, the all-over field pattern is composed of relatively small motifs and the border has numerous stripes, none of which is dominant. Against such a background the coats of arms stand forth as dominating personalities reflecting, as it were, the powerful positions of the individuals for whom the carpets were woven.

In general, the style appears to be an amalgamation of Islamic and native artistic as well as cultural values. In particular, it seems closely related to floor tiles which were extremely popular on the peninsula.

The fashion for patterned floor tiles was a European tradition in contrast to the Islamic preference for placing decorative tiles on the inner and outer surfaces of walls. Among the many representations of floor tiles in paintings by Spanish artists during the 14th and 15th centuries are patterns in which eight-pointed stars appear in alternate octagons (Fig. 9) just as in the armorial carpets.

The use of this layout for floor patterns goes back to ancient Roman times (Fig. 10). There seems, therefore, to have been an age-old tradition for this type of geometric layout with small decorative motifs to enhance the floor. Carpets would certainly provide one of the most colorful solutions, since the process of weaving them allows designs and colors to be introduced at will, a feature that the Mudejars skillfully developed in creating their finest armorial carpets.

In an area rich with geometric patterns, brought to Spain primarily by the Muslims and adopted by Christians and Jews alike, the simplicity of the geometric layouts in the armorial carpets is revealing. Their repetitive shapes, so immediately perceivable, require the addition of decorative motifs, here stars and fanciful lozenges, to create visual excitement. Other than in floor tiles, comparable layouts only rarely survive among the wealth of geometric designs in Spain. Those patterns are usually formed by a greater variety of



Fig. 9 Painting of Sts. Martin(?) and Thecla(?) on star-patterned tile floor by The Master of the Prelate Mur, Aragon, Spain, second half 15th century. Archiepiscopal Palace, Saragossa (Photo. Mas).



Fig. 10 Roman mosaic with same layout as carpet in Figure 6, late 4th century. West Djebel, Tunisia. After M. Fendri in *La Mosaïque Greco-Romaine*, ed. M. G. Picard and M. H. Stern (Paris 1965), fig. 8.

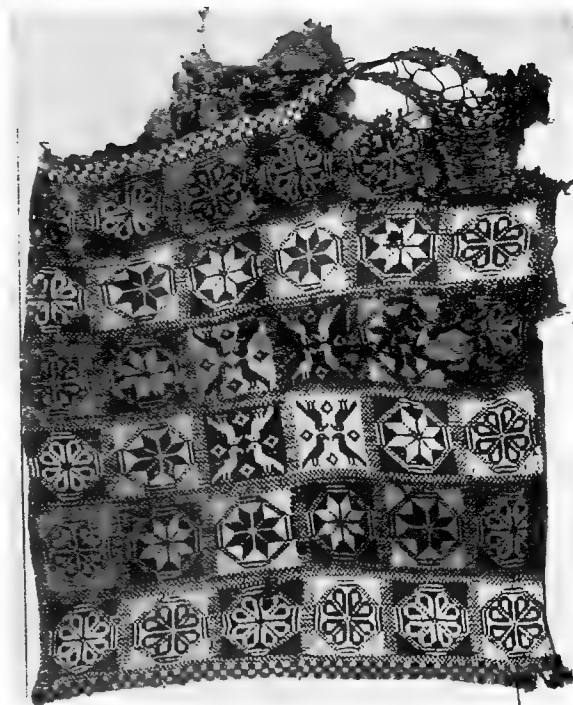


Fig. 11 Knitted pillow cover, 13th century, Convent of Santa Maria de las Huelgas, Burgos, Spain. After Gómez-Moreno, pl. 120 (see Note 4).

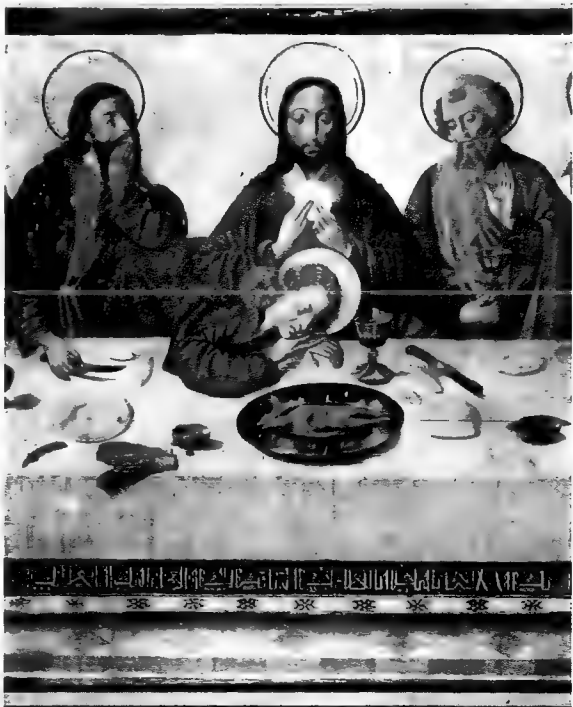


Fig. 12 Carpet with derivative kufic border under tablecloth in *The Last Supper* (detail), School of Burgos, Spain, late 15th century. S. Esteban, Burgos (Photo. Mas).

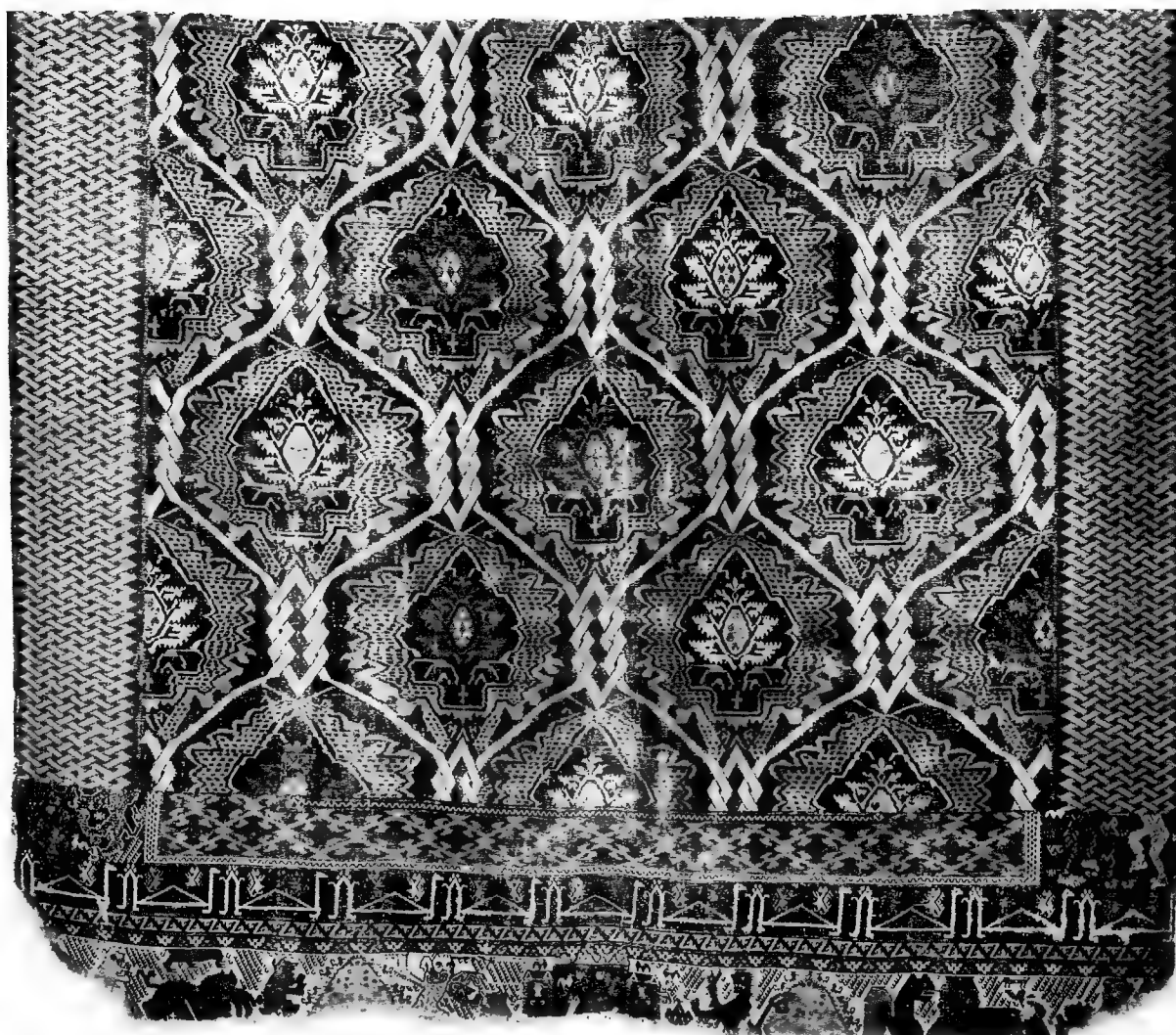


Fig. 13 Carpet fragment with two unrelated patterns, middle or second half 15th century, Letur? or Alcaraz? Spain, L. 1.84 m. W. 2.19 m. Textile Museum R44.4.2.

shapes creating a dynamic appearance independent of additional decoration.

Many of the small motifs in the armorial carpets also appear in the other decorative arts of both Muslims and Christians. Knitted pillow covers and other fabrics dating from the 13th century found in the coffins of the royal family of Castile in the Convent of Santa Maria de las Huelgas at Burgos contain a number of such motifs (Fig. 11): eight-pointed stars,²⁵ groups of four birds, fleur-de-lis; also animals, human figures and geometric motifs.²⁶ These designs and those in the armorial carpets were probably influenced by the same local folk art tradition.²⁷

Border stripes with several patterns of

visual prominence are also distinctive. Multiple bands each with prominent patterns appear in 14th- and 15th-century Valencian lustreware made in Manises²⁸ and in contemporary silk textiles woven in Granada.²⁹

One of the favorite border patterns in armorial carpets is derivative-kufic script, kufic being an angular style of writing Arabic. Arabic script, either legible or meaningless, appears in the art of the Muslims, Christians and Jews on the peninsula until 1492. For Muslims, Arabic is the holy language of the Prophet signifying both divine power and temporal political authority. Often the visibility of Arabic script, rather than its legibility, was the primary concern.³⁰ Arabic writing

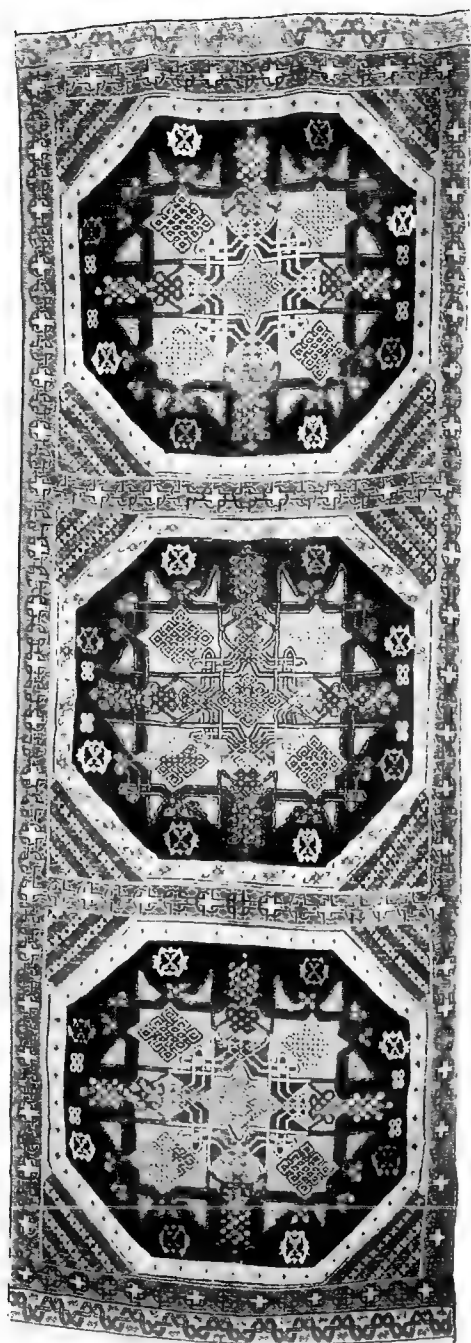


Fig. 14 Carpet fragment with Mudejar pattern, middle or second half 15th century. Alcaraz? Spain, L. 1.81 m. W. .96 m. Textile Museum R44.00.5.

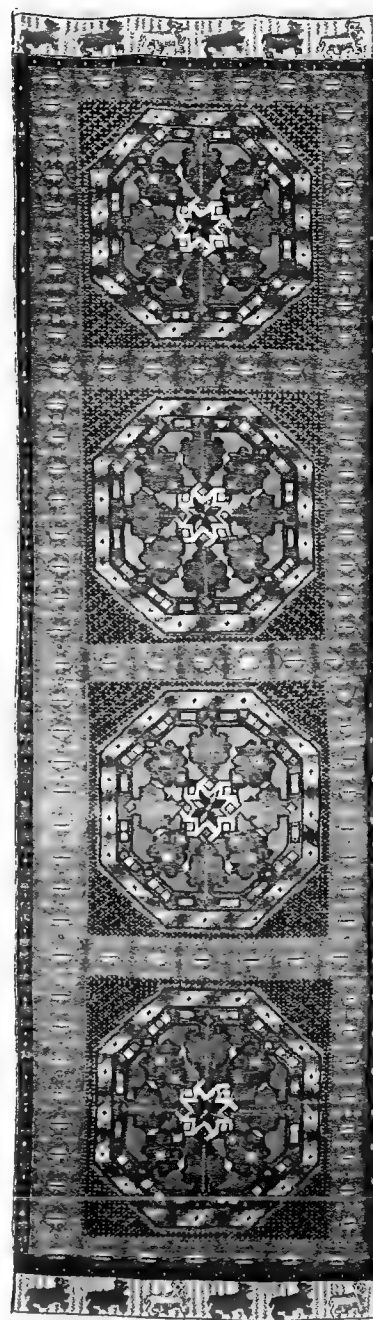


Fig. 15 Carpet with Turkish pattern, middle or second half 15th century, Alcaraz, Spain, L. 3.9 m. W. .97 m. Textile Museum R44.2.2.

also became a symbol of public recognition, status and even power, and these attributes were adopted by both Christians (Fig. 12) and Jews in Spain. Although the kufic in these

armorial carpets is derivative and therefore meaningless, its very presence probably bestowed honorific associations upon the owner of the carpet.

The original significance of the hunting scenes in the extra end-panels has yet to be identified. The fullest version in the Enriquez carpet in Philadelphia (Fig. 4) includes "the wild man" popular in Aragonese art as early as the 13th century. Wild boars and trees with flowers or fruit decorate 15th century Valencian blue and white tiles and bowls of Manises.³¹

In summary, the patterns in the armorial carpets display design elements that were part of the artistic repertoire of the peninsula. There are noticeably few Islamic features which, after all, could have been transmitted directly by the Mudejar weavers. Instead, these armorial carpets have a broader Iberian flavor that sets them apart from the artistic concepts of most carpets woven by Muslims.

OTHER FIFTEENTH CENTURY CARPETS

Most of the other Mudejar carpets woven during the 15th century have vibrant colors and can be placed in two groups: carpets with silk patterns (Fig. 13) and those with octagonal patterns (Figs. 14, 15). Most are attributed to the Murcian town of Alcaraz.

The silk patterns include small curvilinear medallions³² as well as the larger so-called gothic pattern, a curious example of which is in the Textile Museum (Fig. 13). This fragment has two distinctive features. It is yet another carpet in which the pattern was totally changed after the weaving had begun. The first pattern has border stripes similar to those in the Philadelphia Enriquez carpet (Fig. 4), however, the second pattern is totally unrelated in style and scale to those in armorial carpets. In addition, the somber colors of the first pattern—blues, tans, soft yellow and brownish-red—similar to those in the Philadelphia carpet, were also used in weaving the second pattern. That pattern is usually bright red, green and blue.³³ Whether this carpet was woven in Letur where the armorial carpets are tentatively placed or in Alcaraz where the brightly colored so-called gothic pattern carpets are attributed is uncertain. It is clear, however, that the armorial and large gothic silk patterns were being woven simultaneously and with similar colors in the same workshop.

Mudejar carpets with large and small octagonal patterns raise more complicated issues. Despite the similar layout of the star/octagon/square unit in two carpets in the Textile Museum illustrated here (Figs. 14, 15)³⁴ the drawing of the stars came from two different sources. The carpet in Fig. 14 is related to native Iberian art. The carpet in Fig. 15, however, is a Mudejar copy of an imported Turkish carpet, the so-called large-pattern "Holbein."³⁵ In characteristic fashion, the Mudejars imitated the pattern of the field and its colors but used native designs for the border. They also wove the carpet with the traditional single-warp Spanish knot.

The layout of the star/octagon/square unit also appears in other decorative arts on the peninsula and indeed a surprisingly similar rendition is in a Roman mosaic in Alicante (Fig. 16). Although the complex subject of native versus foreign influence is beyond the scope of these brief comments,³⁶ it can be said that the Turkish carpet patterns copied by Mudejar weavers were similar in character to contemporary patterning in the art of the peninsula, with one known exception now to be considered.



Fig. 16 Roman mosaic with layout and scale similar to carpets in Figures 14 and 15, Temple of Elche, Alicante, Spain, 4th-5th century. After P. de Palol, *Arqueología Cristiana de la España Romana* (Madrid 1967), pl. 31:1.

THE CLOUD PATTERN CARPET

A second Mudejar carpet, with an otherwise unknown pattern, was acquired by the Textile Museum from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in 1976 (Fig. 17; technical information is in Appendix B). The field displays an all-over pattern of hooked, angular motifs rendered in deep blue with a dark brown center on a mustard-colored ground. The prominent main border features a yellow braid of seven strands on a blue ground, outlined by dark brown, with brownish-red spots in the interstices. The outer guard stripe has brownish-red leaves on a medium-blue ground, while the inner stripe shows white diamonds on a brown ground.

The specific shade of mustard in the field prompts the question of whether it is the original color or merely the remains of a fugitive dye, having lost its original color after many centuries. Certain yellows in old carpets are actually faded reds, but since the edge of the field in this carpet still has a red stripe, that can hardly have been the color of the ground. Regrettably, scientific analysis currently available cannot provide an answer. It should be recalled that although fugitive dyes are usually associated with carpets woven after the end of Muslim rule in Spain in 1492, a fugitive dye, now also a yellow, appears in the braid pattern in the Philadelphia Enriquez carpet, attributed to the third quarter of the 15th century (Fig. 4).

All of the border patterns in this carpet occur in the armorial carpets and all are clearly associated with the artistic heritage of Spain. A nine-strand braid appears in the Textile Museum carpet with two different patterns (Fig. 13), and there is a three-strand braid in the Philadelphia carpet with Enriquez arms (Fig. 4). Multiple-strand braids were fashionable as borders in the decorative arts of both Muslims and Christians and had also been used as framing devices by the Romans in Spain (Fig. 16). The inner guard pattern is also visible in the same Philadelphia carpet as well as in the carpet in the Textile Museum displaying Enriquez and Rojas arms (Fig. 2). A version of the outer guard stripe also appears in this newly acquired armorial carpet.

The field pattern, on the other hand, is alien to the repertory of Spanish designs.

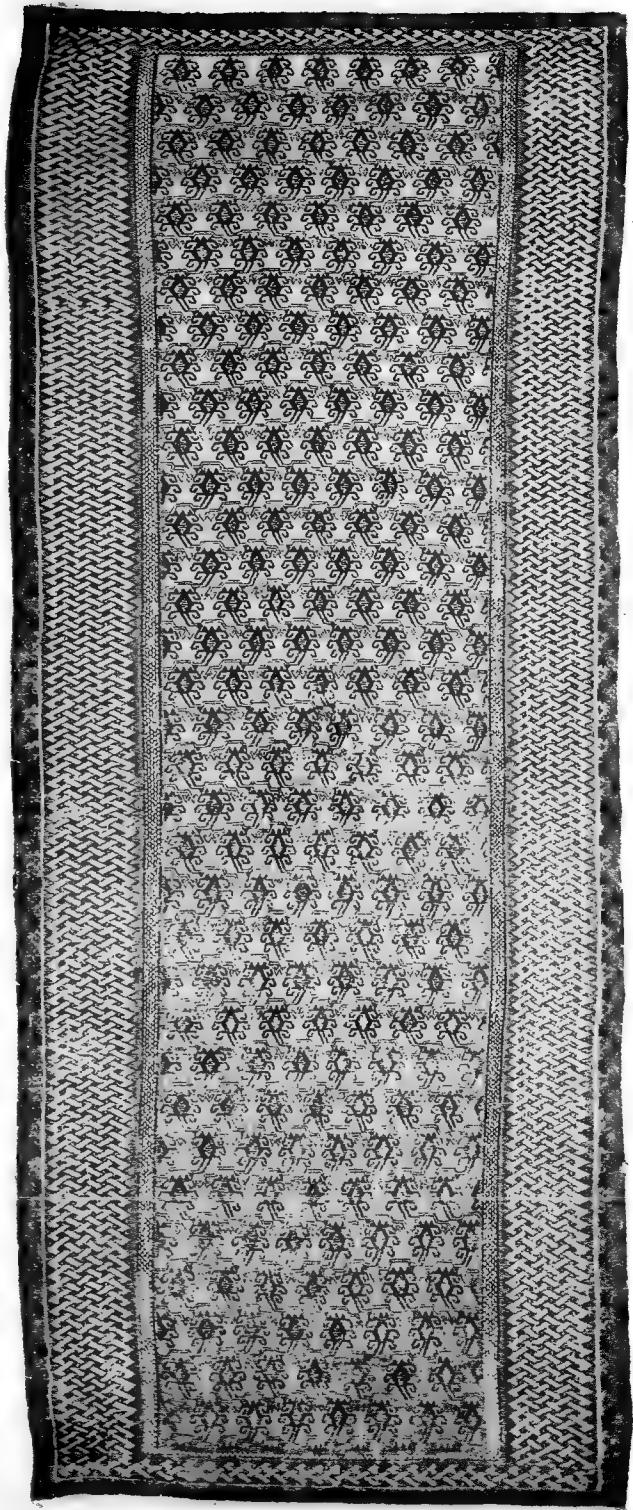


Fig. 17 Carpet with cloud pattern, second half 15th century, Letur? Spain, L. 3.73 m. W. 1.52 m. Textile Museum 1976.10.3, Purchase, Arthur D. Jenkins Gift Fund and Proceeds from the Sale of Art.

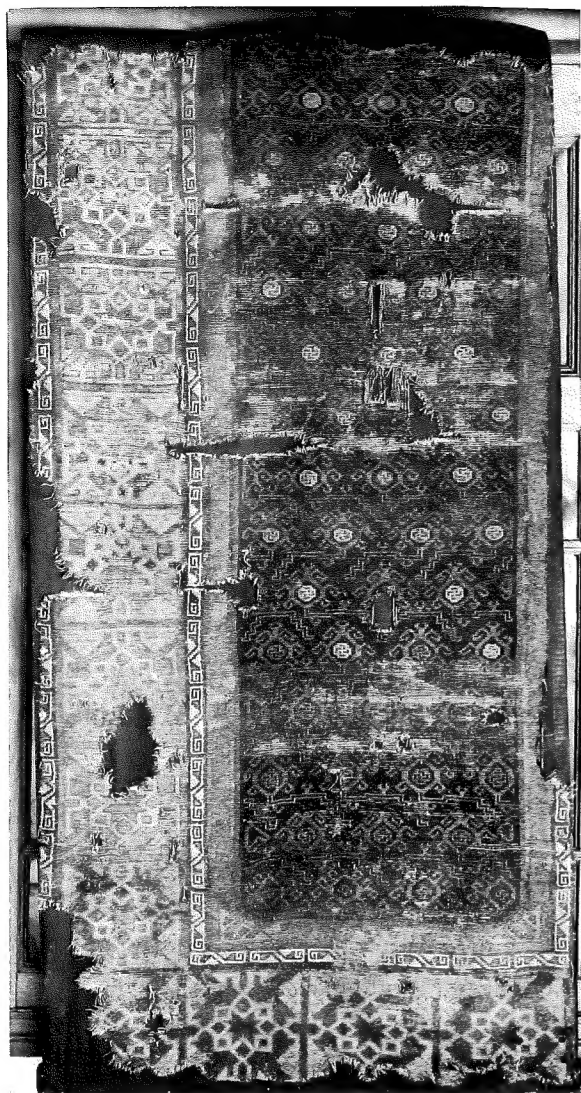


Fig. 18 Turkish carpet with cloud pattern, 14th century, Konya area, L. 1.73 m. W. 1.30 m. Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul.

Seven, or seven and a half, angular motifs face in opposite directions in successive rows, for a total of thirty-four rows. This persistent regularity speaks of faithful devotion to an admired model. Indeed, it is remarkable to discover still surviving a Turkish carpet with a pattern of this very type, of the sort that must have served as the antecedent for the field of the Mudejar carpet.

The Turkish carpet, probably made during the 14th century in the Konya area, is in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul (Fig. 18). Despite its worn condition, the field pattern is clearly visible: asymmetrical hooked motifs, four in a row, aligned in



Fig. 19 Chinese silk damask fragment with cloud pattern, Yüan Dynasty, early 14th century, excavated in Egypt. The Metropolitan Museum of Art 46.156.20, Rogers Fund.

the same manner. A comparison of an individual motif from each carpet emphasizes the remarkable similarities, both in the drawing of the "body" and the "tail."

Fortunately, circumstances allow even further identification of this otherwise little understood motif. It was derived from a sinuous cloud pattern woven in Chinese silk damasks during the Yüan Dynasty (1279-1368), fragments of which have been excavated in Egypt (Fig. 19).³⁷ The curvilinear form of the cloud in the Chinese silk was given angular contours in the Turkish—and therefore also the Mudejar — carpet, a simplification necessitated by the coarser weaving of that carpet. But the correspondence is undeniable, the movement of the "tail" of the cloud, and in particular, the placement of the motif, staggered and facing in opposite directions in successive rows.

The geographic and temporal span from a late 13th-century Chinese silk damask to a 14th-century Turkish carpet and then to a

15th-century carpet made in Spain, with the silk fragments excavated in Egypt in an early 14th century context, raises many fascinating questions. Included are the intricacies of international trade as well as the significance of using foreign designs and the duration of their meaning and fashion.

Despite the changing political relations among countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea during the late middle ages, the transport of trade goods remained economically essential, with the Venetians, Genoese and, in some areas, the Catalans being the most powerful sea merchants. The eastern Mediterranean island of Chios, located off the seaport of Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey), was a significant bridge for commerce with Anatolia and inventory records indicate that carpets were important items of trade there during the 15th century. Undoubtedly, some of the carpets were transported to the Iberian peninsula.

But why was this Chinese pattern so fashionable? The asymmetrical nature of the cloud and related patterns was a true innovation for the western world in the late 13th century, introducing a new concept of patterning with asymmetrical designs that covered the surface. Its influence is clearly evident in new pattern styles that became fashionable in Europe and the Near East. There is less evidence for this asymmetrical patterning in the art from the Iberian peninsula although other types of Chinese motifs were adopted.³⁸

Although the illustrated Turkish carpet (Fig. 18) is attributed to the 14th century, it must be asked how many generations continued to weave this new, fashionable pattern, when were the carpets first exported to Spain, and how long did the Murcian weavers copy the imported model? The Turkish carpet patterns known to have been copied by Murcian weavers during the 15th century have

octagonal patterns that are highly compatible with the art in the peninsula.³⁹ The same cannot be said of the asymmetrical cloud pattern.

Based on the similarities in the border patterns and the colors with armorial carpets, especially the Philadelphia carpet and the Textile Museum fragment with two different patterns (Figs. 4 and 13), this newly acquired carpet would not have been woven before the middle of the 15th century and was probably made during the second half of the century, or at the latest, at the very beginning of the 16th. Moreover, it may have been woven in the same center as the armorial carpets, being tentatively Letur or Lietor.

It remains difficult to explain why the clientele found this unfamiliar pattern attractive, unless it was through association with things foreign. But if that was the case, it is unlikely that the original model and therefore the Chinese origin would have still been known. Even though many unanswerable questions remain, the importance of this carpet with its asymmetrical pattern is nevertheless readily apparent.

In summary, two groups of carpets were woven in the province of Murcia by the Mudejars during the 15th century, those with native and those with imported patterns. Patterns copied from Turkish carpets are similar in character to contemporary art of the peninsula and are usually framed by native borders. One exception is the asymmetrical cloud pattern. Most of the surviving Mudejar carpets, however, display a style and iconography that was characteristic of the cultural heritage of the peninsula and was not dominated by any one ethnic or religious group. The character of these carpets is distinctive and, in the broad view of the history of carpet weaving, the skillful patterns and use of color cause the Mudejar carpets to be ranked along with the finest in the world.

APPENDIX A: Technical Analysis of Carpet with Coats of Arms of Maria Enriquez and Juan de Rojas (Cover and Figures 2, 3)

Acc. no.: 1976.10.2.

Size: length 3.73 m., width 1.98 m.

Warp: wool, ivory, 2 Z-yarns S-plied.

Weft: wool, ivory, 3 Z-yarns, 1 row.

Pile: wool, 2 Z-yarns (some 2 I-yarns), single-warp knot (Spanish knot), 10 horiz. x 13 vert. per inch (130 knots per square inch).

Colors: cardinal red, yellow, dark blue, medium blue, medium-dark green, ivory, tan, rose, dark brown (mostly corroded).

Condition: (Blazons woven upside down in carpet, therefore, the beginning of the carpet is at the top of the illustration.) Carpet worn. Missing outer left guard stripe and extra end-panel at the beginning; at the end a new band with polychrome chain was re woven between the carpet and the original extra end-panel. No original finishes. Dark brown mostly disintegrated. Scattered areas of reknott ing including the dark brown lions in the Enriquez blazons which are reknotted with medium brown.

Illustrated: Florence Lewis May, "Hispano-Moresque Rugs," *Notes Hispanic*, V, The Hispanic Society of America, New York, 1945, Fig. 23.

APPENDIX B: Technical Analysis of Carpet with Cloud Pattern (Figure 17)

Acc. no.: 1976.10.3

Size: length 3.73 m., width 1.52 m.

Warp: wool, ivory, 2 Z-yarns S-plied.

Weft: wool, ivory, 3 and 4 Z-yarns, 1 row.

Pile: wool, 2 Z-yarns S-plied, some 1 Z-yarns, single-warp knot (Spanish knot), 8 horiz. x 9 vert. per inch (72 knots per square inch).

Colors: mustard color (field, original?), yellow, deep blue, medium blue, brownish-red, ivory, dark brown.

Condition: (Pattern woven upside down). Good. No original finishes. Reknotted outer guard at end. Scattered areas of reknott ing. Dark brown partially disintegrated.

Not previously illustrated.

NOTES

1. For a list of the six classical carpets acquired, see Andrew Oliver, Jr., "Introduction" to "A Turkish Carpet with Spots and Stripes" by L. W. Mackie, *Textile Museum Journal*, IV:3 (1976), 4.

2. E. Kühnel and L. Bellinger, *The Textile Museum, Catalogue of Spanish Rugs, 12th Century to 19th Century*, Washington, D. C., 1953.

3. M. González Martí, *Cerámica del Levante Español*, II, Barcelona, 1952, pl. XVIII.

4. M. Gómez-Moreno, *El Panteon Real de las Huelgas de Burgos*, Madrid, 1946, pls. 28, 29, 60, 78, 137.

5. M. H. Beattie, "A Legacy of Carpets from the World of Islam," *The Connoisseur*, vol. 191, no. 770 (April 1976), figs. 1, 6, and color plate.

6. T. Mankowski, "Some Documents from Polish Sources Relating to Carpet Making in the Time of Shah 'Abbas I," *A Survey of Persian Art*, ed. A. U. Pope, London and New York, 1939, III, 2431-2436.

7. Al-Idrisi, *Description de l'Afrique et de l'Espagne*, trans. R. Dozy et A. J. de Goeje, Leyde, 1866, 195/237.

8. R. B. Serjeant, "Material for a History of Islamic Textiles up to the Mongol Conquest: Textiles and the Tiraz in Spain," *Ars Islamica*, 15-16 (1951), 29; Kühnel and Bellinger, *op. cit.*, p. 7, pl. III and p. 5, pls. I, II.

9. Width of the field is 36 in., width of right border is 21 in., therefore width of two side borders would have been 42 in. Only the right and lower borders retain their original width.

10. M. S. Dimand and J. Mailey, *Oriental Rugs in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1973, fig. 223, cat. no. 154, field pattern differs, having a curvilinear ogival layout framing leaves and grapes.

11. Carpets in the Textile Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Vizcaya.

12. Information kindly supplied by Florence L. May, Curator of Textiles, The Hispanic Society of America, New York City: 1914 Julio Kocherthaler, Madrid; 1924 Hugo Helbing, Munich; before 1933 Adolfo Loewi, Venice.

13. A. van de Put, "Some Fifteenth-Century Spanish Carpets," *The Burlington Magazine*, no. CII, vol. XIX (Sept. 1911), 349.

14. *Ibid.*, 349, color plate of top of carpet opposite p. 311.

15. F. L. May, "Hispano-Moresque Rugs," *Notes Hispanic*, The Hispanic Society of America, V (1945), figs. 1-13 (no. H328), fig. 15 (The Detroit Institute of Arts, no. 43.75).

16. Kühnel and Bellinger, *op. cit.*, pl. IV color. Color changes also in beginning of Enriquez/Banda/Ayala carpet at Vizcaya. Solid blue grounds in Textile Museum Enriquez/Rojas and Philadelphia Museum of Art Enriquez carpets.

17. Van de Put, *op. cit.*, 349-350.

18. May, *op. cit.*, fig. 26 (Madrid, Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan); Dimand and Mailey, *op. cit.*, fig. 218 (Metropolitan Museum of Art); J. Ferrandis Torres, *Exposición de Alfombras Antiguas Españolas*, Madrid, 1933, pl. I (location unknown).

19. May, *op. cit.*, fig. 22; O. S. Berberyan and W. G. Thomson, *A Catalogue of Carpets of Spain and of the Orient in the Collection of Charles Deering, Esq.*, London, 1924, pls. XII, XIII; Ferrandis Torres, *op. cit.*, pls. II, III; K. Erdmann, *Seven Hundred Years of Oriental Carpets*, ed. H. Erdmann, trans. M. H. Beattie and H. Herzog, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970, fig. 194; Hispanic Society of America, New York City, no. H321.

20. Van de Put, *op. cit.*, 345-346; May, *op. cit.*, 58, fig. 30.

21. Van de Put, *op. cit.*, 346-347.

22. V. Gay, *Glossaire archéologique du moyen âge et de la renaissance*, Paris 1928, II, 380.

23. Fig. 15 for example.

24. Kühnel and Bellinger, *op. cit.*, 2.

25. Gómez-Moreno, *op. cit.*, pls. 64, 66.

26. *Ibid.*, pls. 106, 111, 121, 123, 125, 135; for geometric comparison see also B. Pavon Maldonado, *El Arte Hispanomusulman en su decoracion geometrica*, Madrid, 1975, pl. 27 (Madinat al-Zahra').

27. There is no stylistic or iconographic evidence to support the view that Coptic art influenced the representation of human or animal figures in armorial carpets.

28. A. W. Frothingham, *Lustreware of Spain*, New York, 1951, figs. 8-11, 50-52, 58-60.

29. L. W. Mackie, "Weaving through Spanish History, 13th-17th Centuries," Textile Museum exhibition guide, 1972, No. 11, illus.; M. S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*, New York, 1947, fig. 184.

30. R. Ettinghausen, "Arabic Epigraphy: Communication or Symbolic Affirmation," *Near Eastern Numismatics, Iconography, Epigraphy and History: Studies in Honor of George C. Miles*, ed. D. K. Kouymjian, Beirut, 1974, 302 ff.

31. González Marti, *op. cit.*, fig. 673; González Marti, *Cerámica del Levante Español*, III, Barcelona, 1952, fig. 254.

32. Kühnel and Bellinger, *op. cit.*, pls. XX, XXI; for related silks see F. L. May, *Silk Textiles of Spain, Eighth to Fifteenth Century*, New York, 1957, figs. 21, 36; for representation as floor covering see C. R. Post, *A History of Spanish Painting*, II, Cambridge (Mass.), 1930, fig. 227.

33. Kühnel and Bellinger, *op. cit.*, pl. XVIII color.

34. For color illustration, *ibid.*, pls. XII, XVI.

35. C. G. Ellis, "A Soumak-Woven Rug in a 15th Century International Style," *Textile Museum Journal*, 1, no. 2 (1963), fig. 9; also illus. Dimand and Mailey, *op. cit.*, fig. 151.

36. D. Shepherd, "A Fifteenth-Century Spanish Carpet," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, Oct. 1954, 189.

37. First pointed out by Agnes Geijer, "Some Thoughts on the Problems of Early Oriental Carpets," *Ars Orientalis* V (1963), 83, figs. 1, 2.

38. May, *Silk Textiles of Spain*, fig. 107.

39. S. B. Sherrill, "The Islamic tradition in Spanish rug weaving: twelfth through seventeenth centuries," *The Magazine Antiques*, vol. CV, no. 3 (March 1974), pl. III and fig. 9.

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